



PRESS RELEASE

USS KITTY HAWK (CV 63)
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U.S., Japanese vice admirals visit Kitty Hawk

USS Kitty Hawk Public Affairs

The U.S. Seventh Fleet Commander, Vice Adm. Doug Crowder, and Commander-in-Chief of the Japanese Maritime Self-Defense Force (JMSDF), Vice Adm. Kazunari Doke, flew aboard USS Kitty Hawk (CV 63) Nov. 12 as the two nations take part in their largest maritime exercise.

The two were aboard during the exercise ANNUALEX 18G, which kicked off Nov. 9 and ends Nov. 16. There, they met with Rear Adm. Douglas McClain, Battle Force Seventh Fleet commander, who briefed them on the exercise's progress.

This is the 18th ANNUALEX exercise, and is designed to improve both forces' capabilities in the defense of Japan.

About 8,500 U.S. Sailors are taking part aboard 13 ships, submarines and various shore-based aircraft. About 90 JMSDF ships and 130 aircraft are also participating.

McClain is commanding those U.S. forces from his flagship, USS Kitty Hawk, with Japanese military officials commanding their own forces.

"Japan is our closest ally in the region," said Crowder, "and we value the close relationship with our counterparts in JMSDF as we work together to address regional issues of vital importance to both countries.

"ANNUALEX is vital to our alliance and regional stability," said he added.

Japanese and U.S. forces are also working to improve military-to-military relationships during the exercise through command and control, air, undersea and surface warfare training.

"The professionalism and tactical expertise of the JMSDF is widely known," Crowder added. "Our years of training and operating together only enhance our relationship and add to the realism and professionalism of exercises like ANNUALEX."

U.S. ships taking part in ANNUALEX 18G are the Kitty Hawk, the guided-missile cruisers USS Cowpens (CG 63) and USS Shiloh (CG 67); guided-missile destroyers USS Curtis W. Wilbur (DDG 54), USS John S. McCain (DDG 56), USS Fitzgerald (DDG 62), USS Stethem (DDG 63), USS Lassen (DDG 82), USS Mustin (DDG 89), USS Halsey (DDG 97); the high-speed vessel Swift (HSV 2) and submarines USS Seawolf (SSN 21) and USS Asheville (SSN 758).

The U.S. Seventh Fleet is made up of about 50 ships, 120 aircraft and 20,000 Sailors and Marines in the Western Pacific and Indian Oceans.

To find more news about the Kitty Hawk Strike Group, visit the Navy NewsStand at www.news.navy.mil/local/cv63.

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